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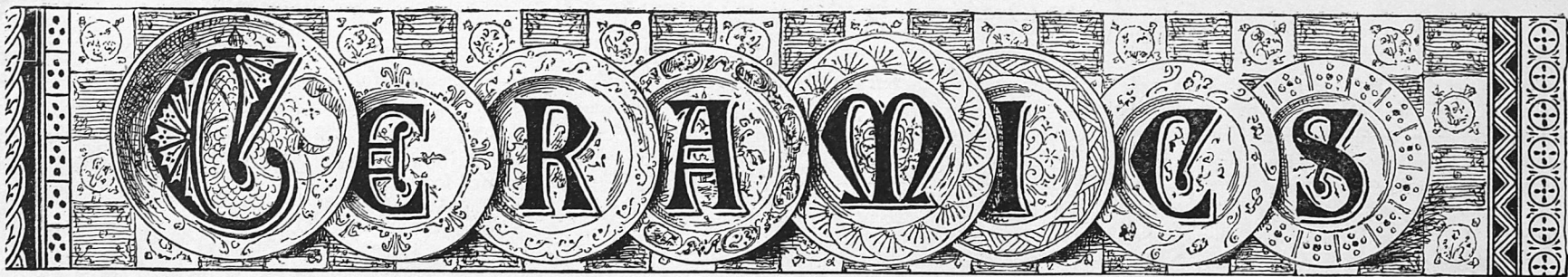
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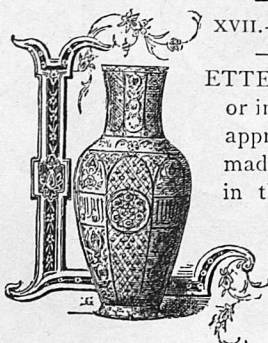
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HINTS TO CHINA PAINTERS.



XVII.—LETTERING.

LETTERING, either in monograms or in mottoes, expressive of some appropriate sentiment, can be made to play an important part in the decoration of porcelain.

Mottoes or inscriptions appear upon much of the old pottery as well as upon some of more recent date. The Chinese and Japanese place inscriptions

on their ware, explanatory of the pictures portrayed upon it. The old Italian majolica was made the means of much pretty love-making, and we know from the inscription on the scroll surrounding her head that some lady, who seems to us of most uncommon ugliness, was "bella" to her lover. Later, the English potters catered to what was supposed to be American taste, with perhaps only too much acceptance, by making the hideous but patriotic pottery decorated with portraits of Washington, or with American scenes bearing dates and appropriate mottoes, printed upon its surface.

Letters require the most careful drawing, yet the correctness of eye and steadiness of hand necessary for such drawing may be the possession of one to whom work of a more artistic character would be impossible. Such a one could accomplish decorations upon plates or upon panels or tiles to be inserted in walls, mantel-pieces or furniture, that would be very acceptable in a decorative point of view. The mottoes portrayed in the style of illuminations would then form the principal decoration, but they can also be used with good effect as subordinate to other designs. Coats of arms with their mottoes can be used upon the china of those who possess them by inheritance, and for those who do not, monograms must serve the purpose.*

The simplest form of letter consistent with elegance of shape is the best. The law that ornament should grow out of the construction applies here as elsewhere. The ordinary decorator in designing a letter seems to let his fancy run riot, and overloads the outline with senseless ornament. Bosses and projections are put on in every conceivable shape, without any excuse for their being. Study of the best models will show greater simplicity of form. Whenever any curve or swelling projection is added, it grows naturally out of construction, and is not stuck on without any connection with the original form of the letter. Any ornament which is added must be in the shape of a background separated from the letter, and subordinate to it.

In designing a monogram, an effort should be made to give the principal letter prominence, either in size or color, to have the monogram legible, and so arranged that the letters will naturally be read in the order intended. In painting one on china a good arrangement is gold, black and red. If the name of a person, the letter of the surname might be made entirely of gold with an outline of black all around or only on one side, accenting the shadowed side of the latter; the first letter of the Christian name might be in red, either a slender letter in solid red or red outlined with gold; and the letter of the middle name might be a slender black letter.

If the gold, instructions for making which have been given in a previous chapter, is used, it may be put on with the colors, only where the letters interlace care should be taken that the color is not laid over the gold, or the gold over the color. Each must be laid directly on the china, and they must not impinge upon each other. If a poorer quality of gold is used the proximity of the colors may injure the gold, and it



DESIGN FOR A FISH-PLATE.

will probably require a second application. The best quality of gold, however, produces such a solid gilding that no difficulty will be experienced in firing it and colors together. In making letters or monograms, a fine brush must be used. A fine lining brush is good for making the fine lines, which must be of the same thickness throughout. Great care, considerable steadiness of hand, and practice with the brush are necessary to excellence in painting letters.



MOTIVE FOR A PLAQUE. "AUGUST."

The slightest irregularity will be painfully apparent. The drawing may be made upon the china with a lithographic crayon. If, however, the painter cannot trust himself to get a correct outline in this way, the design may be made first upon a piece of paper. An upright line should be drawn through the centre and also one at right angles to it. If the letter is one formed of two halves exactly alike, the paper can be folded along the central line after one half is drawn,

and by rubbing a smooth rounded surface over the paper, an impression of the other side of the letter will be made, which will correspond with the one already drawn. When the letter or monogram has been carefully drawn on the paper, it can be traced on the reverse side by holding the paper up to the window. This tracing must be made with a lithographic crayon, and when finished the side upon which the tracing has been made is laid upon the china, and by rubbing the upper side with something smooth and hard the outline will be imprinted upon the surface. The same tracing can be used several times without renewal, if it is desired to repeat the same monogram upon other pieces. Of late a fancy for quaint and even archaic styles of lettering has been revived. This gives the artist greater freedom, as although much care must be exercised in forming even such letters, yet slight irregularities will not be noticed as in those of a more formal style. Examples of numerous kinds of such lettering may be seen in the current magazines, some of them very good. Such quaint and fanciful lettering may be used for mottoes which are subordinate to other designs, and the words may be designedly placed, so as to run through the decoration in an irregular manner, so that the effect will not be too pronounced, but will only be discovered upon careful examination of the design. In this way charming effects may be produced, and the interest of the piece of china, especially if intended for some special purpose, as a gift to a friend or to commemorate some event, may be greatly enhanced.

M. LOUISE McLAUGHLIN.

EARLY ENGLISH POTTERY.

CERAMIC TREASURES IN A CURIOUS MUSEUM.

A MUSEUM of Geology does not seem the most attractive of places to persons with a taste for art. The Museum of Geology therefore on Jermyn Street, just off the Piccadilly Circus in London, is very little frequented by others than those of a scientific habit of mind, and is scarcely known at all to our voyaging country people. Nevertheless, there is no place in London, not even excepting the vast museum at South Kensington, where the ceramic art of Great Britain is better illustrated by perfect and abundant specimens, judiciously arranged, than in this silent and almost solitary place.

The collection is very extensive, and is arranged in shallow glass cases fixed against the wall, every object relieved against a dull, neutral-tinted background and within the easiest range of even near-sighted eyes. Everybody who knows the tantalizing pleasure of studying ceramic collections in the glass cases that are set with glass upon all their four sides, and thus as full of distracting glimmers, reflections, and cross lights as they are of vitrified color, will realize what a satisfaction such cases as the Jermyn Street ones are to the anxious student. Everything is placed in chronological order, distinctly described by printed labels, and in many instances side by side with capital forgeries and clever imitations, by means of which slight peculiarities of drawing, color-manipulation, and glaze are brought to the amateur's notice more clearly than they could be otherwise. More than this, there are still other cases where the geological constitution of all this artistic workmanship may be studied in the clays, spars, flints and the like of which the objects are composed, as well as in the different processes of their mixing and fusion.

The first case is very cleverly arranged to show the present state of the ceramic art in England contrasted with its beginnings. The upper half of the case is filled with the modern triumphs of the Doulton, Min-

* The very complete series of monograms now being published in THE ART AMATEUR, and the many pages of ornamental letters given in earlier volumes of the magazine, will supply all requirements of the china painter. Some of our illuminated letters (rendered in black and white) reproduced from old manuscripts will also be found useful.—ED. A. A.

ton, and Worcester works, the lower with the uncouth posset cups, plates and jugs of two hundred years ago. Most of these latter for their rarity, quaintness and naïveté are described in almost all popular modern works on English ceramics, but neither words nor pictures can reproduce their absolute, childish ignorance of every artistic idea and rule.

There is one large, coarse platter, lead-glazed, perhaps the earliest there, which represents Charles the Second in coronation robes. The saturnine expression and Italian cast of countenance of that monarch can be plainly recognized, although shown only in rough outlines. One arm is drawn in its proper place, but its fellow starts from the royal thigh which is level with the yellow foliage of the blue-trunked thicket which frames him. Another platter decorated with a Stuart king has foliage and sky of exactly the same color, both king and landscape all blurred and blotted.

One of much later date, representing William and Mary, does not show the progress either in texture or decoration that might be expected. The royal features are simply blue dots, the forms of both figures represented merely in outline, and the huge yellow wigs are painted in a solid, wooden blotch. Queen Mary's chin has a dot evidently intended to represent a dimple, but a dot of such magnitude as to give the impression that the dimple was twice as big and three times as blue as the imbecile mouth above it. A platter, decorated with the portrait of Queen Anne, shows vast improvement in color-manipulation, even if little in drawing. Queen Anne's eyes are rolled spasmodically up in her head, but her robes are more than bare outline, and her colossal head-dress more than spectral. These quaint specimens are all from the various Staffordshire potteries, the first in England, and some bear the celebrated Thomas Toft's name, some the mark of William Taylor.

The next case is full of Liverpool ware, much of it the familiar yellowish-white, with black transfer landscapes and portraits. One is of John Wesley in bag-wig

in cages, and bird, beast, and flower, in the peculiar dingy blues, greens, and yellows of their time. Coarse potteries existed upon the Mersey even in mediæval days, but the first modern mention of them was in 1674. Numbers of the Liverpool objects are presentation mugs bearing the name of the recipient and the date, and some of the middle of the eighteenth century show good artistic treatment. One printed teapot has a design in black of a lady pouring out tea for a gentleman, while upon the other side of the teapot is the verse :

"Kindly take this gift of mine,
The gift and giver I hope are thine,
And though their value is but small,
A loving heart is with it all."

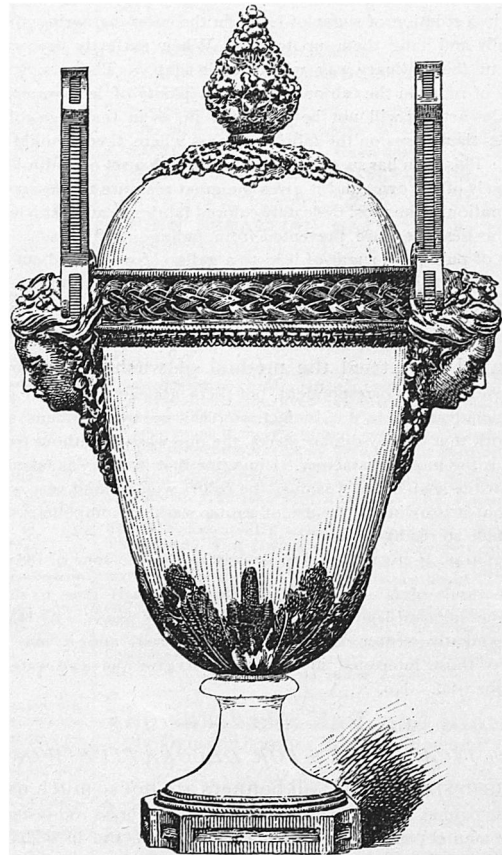
In this case of Liverpool wares is an object almost unique of its kind. It is kept in a small silk-lined case, like some valuable ornament, but is only a dark little cup holding scarcely more than a gill. It is of grayish ware, thinly glazed, streaked with black and brown, and has a raised band running around it about two-thirds of the distance from the top. This is a specimen of Place's ware of which only two others exist. It was bought from Horace Walpole's collection, at Strawberry Hill, and has a pasteboard label in Walpole's own handwriting: Place was a Yorkshire gentleman with a taste for painting, etching, designing, and potting, who died in 1728. He lost money by the latter hobby, and was forced to relinquish it, but not until he had sent his name down to posterity linked to this peculiar, melancholy-looking ware, rarer now than even the famously rare Henri Deux.

Likewise in this goodly Liverpool and Place company are several obese teapots with gilt ornamentation; and a glittering black mug among others of its kind, evidently made in commemoration of a marriage and inscribed, "Richard and Ruth Goddin, 1769." These are the Jackfield ware, black in body, highly vitrified, and so brilliantly glazed that it looks almost like opaque glass. A great trade in this ware with America was stopped by our Revolutionary War, and hundreds of these funny, squat teapots and gilded black mugs must be buried in dusky New England garrets and black cupboards to-day. On some of them were painted ornaments in oil as well as modelled gold relief, both portraits and views. Our great-grandmothers used to call them "Jack teapots." Here also is a punch-bowl of the Liverpool Delft ware, a cold bluish glaze over Dutch-like colors, and at the bottom the words, "One bowl more, and then —" There is moral suggestiveness in the dash, even if no Hogarthian beauty, and it somehow leaves a less satisfying impression upon the mind than does the inscription upon a jug in the possession of Mr. Jevitt, historiographer of the ceramic art in England. This inscription asks the question, and answers it also in this wise: "One pot more, and what then? Why, then, another pot."

The museum is particularly rich in Nantgarw, that beautiful porcelain, but so short-lived in manufacture, of the early part of this century. It was an offshoot or rather secession from the Worcester works with a slight interregnum at Pinxton, and was finally bought up and absorbed by the Coalport China Works. William Billingsley, the father of this exquisite porcelain, was one of the most remarkable of the whole line of English potters, and his artistic genius has left its mark upon the best decorations of both Derby and Worcester productions. The Nantgarw has a general blush rose complexion, with a lustrous glaze. The floral decorations are as highly finished and realistic as the satin painting which we have seen of that period. Many of the borders are of pale green, interspersed at regular intervals with small floral groups or clusters enclosed in medallions. This porcelain is one of the most costly nowadays of any modern manufacture.

Close by the Nantgarw is a wealth of Swansea china delicately sprigged (one of Henry James's minute young men, whose life was given to the worship of bibelots, was described as resembling or suggesting sprigged china), and covered with scattered color in the midst of broad borders lavishly gilded. Then comes a maze of Chelsea, dazzling with flamingoes and birds of paradise, wound about with scrolls and festoons of raised, solid gold. Splendor and luxury could never equal the display upon this gorgeous Chelsea, one might think, if yonder were not bewildering cases of Orientally colored Worcester, gold-wrought Rockingham, and massive Crown Derby. In the Worcester collection is a remnant of a service made for Lord Nelson in 1802. This is a cup and saucer, rich and dark in color,

red predominating, but not particularly elegant or refined in effect. They are decorated with baronial and ducal crowns, and the Order of St. Josef, set in panels on ground painted and gilded with conventional pattern of Oriental character. Disagreeably noticeable is the ugly shape of the saucer, a shape common to china of those times, where the cup is engulfed in an abyss



WHITE VASE OF OLD SÈVRES PORCELAIN WITH GOUTHIÈRE MOUNTINGS OF GILDED BRONZE.

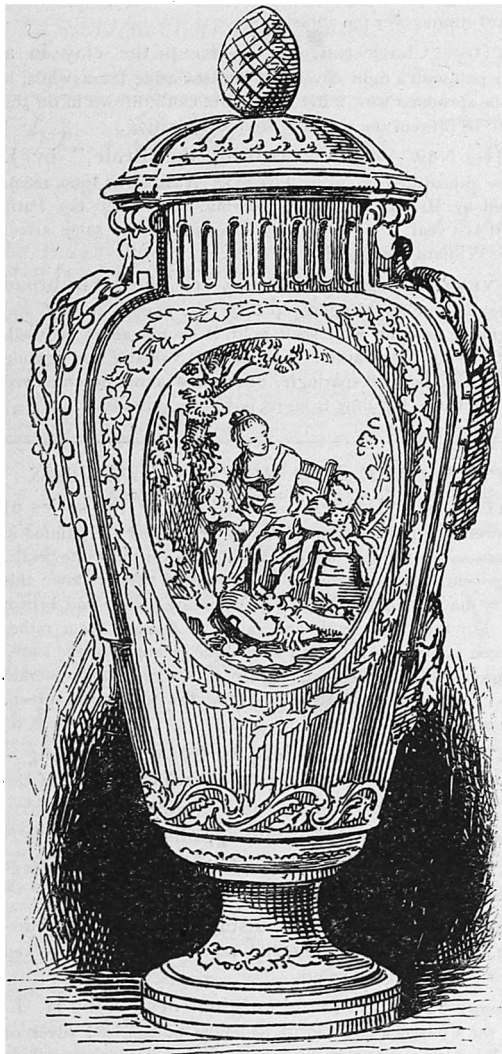
IN THE LATE HAMILTON COLLECTION.

up to its very rim, the saucer having at least twice the fluid capacity of the cup.

It is curious to notice in so abundant a collection the fluctuating varieties of form in articles so simple as cups and saucers. Sometimes cups have been so flaring and shallow that tea would naturally waste all its caloric "upon the desert air" before it could be decently imbibed. Some have been straight and stiff like pewter mugs, some with rims flaring outward like convolvulus petals, pretty to speak of, but impossible to drink from without slopping. Some have scalloped edges, well adapted to start tea streamlets and rivulets down one's chin. Some are fluted from top to bottom, some bulge midway and then compress their rims as if closing like flowers over the dew in their hearts. Some have covers, and some have two handles, some one, some none. Some Rockingham cups are decorated both inside and out, and with a totally differing scheme of color. One set is dull red upon the exterior with a single ornamental device—shamrock, thistle, rose, or daisy, upon solid ground of dull color; inside is a prim wreath of nameless flowers upon white.

Much of the Rockingham ware is heraldic in device; it is always edged with gold and wrought with massive gold ornamentation, and its general effect is heavy. Bow, reminding one of Plymouth, but with harder, coarser, more glittering enamel, and with fat, clumsy partridge patterns, is largely represented. Plymouth, dainty and delicate, with airy detached ornamentation and soft glaze, pure as new milk and of the same glossiness, is also well shown. There are whole shelves laden with Wedgwood productions and Wedgwood's tentative efforts, as well as consummate successes in Queen's ware, willow ware, jade, salt-glaze, slip, tortoise-shell, agate, black basalt and delicate, cold Jasper, may be clearly and consecutively traced and studied. There are also specimens of Bristol, plain and simple, with detached branches of flowers upon white grounds; numerous examples of the ill-fated Elers ware, which British potters suppressed because its manufacturers were both better potters than they, and not Britons; specimens of Spode, of Copeland—indeed such an embarrassment of riches that the pen falters before their very names.

MARGARET BERTHA WRIGHT.



SOFT-PASTE TURQUOISE-BLUE VASE OF OLD SÈVRES PORCELAIN.

IN THE LATE HAMILTON COLLECTION.

and bands, about as hideous a decoration as faience ever had. There are numerous specimens of every variety of ware manufactured on the banks of the Mersey, many of them decorated with conventional full-rigged ships sailing on carefully fluted seas, birds